

# **Another Eden**

By

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Errata: In line 1, verse 1, of 'Elegy for Eunice Odio'  
the word 'swarm' should read 'swam'.



## HOW TO BE A PROPHET

A perfunctory concept  
can never scapegoat pain.  
Jesus Christ sweated blood;  
drops of blood actuate  
this ticking universe.  
Sure, salt tears petition,  
heartaches may supplicate  
but to bring a sceptic  
on board every prophet  
needs to raise up the dead;  
the firm flesh of wisdom  
should always be found  
wrapped around the bones  
of unselfconscious love.



## RADICAL

Taking the dead  
at their word  
has always been  
the problem –

they come to me  
with ideas  
as big as Hades  
but all I can do

is laugh and laugh –  
in the end  
I turn over and fight  
for Vietnam

one more time.

## HOW TO BE A PROPHET

A perfunctory concept  
can never escape pain  
Jesus Christ sweated blood;  
drops of blood activate  
this ticking universe.  
Sure, all wars begin  
heartaches may supplicate  
but to bring a scepter  
on board every prophet  
needs to raise up the dead;  
the thin flesh of wisdom  
should always be found  
wrapped around the bones  
of unconscious love.



## SONNET

It was the mother of heart-breaking tasks.  
I should have expected it, that's for sure  
since sweet-natured kids never feel secure  
till the ogre smiles, and the jester sings.  
Oozing innocence, you were just too bright,  
too quick on the uptake. You sensed pain  
around the corner like shepherds sense rain;  
damp eyes and silence glumly eloquent.  
So the sleet birlled on the galloping wind;  
my heart screamed as the mad Arctic battered  
the spinning town and resentment clattered  
about in my head like a bad scotch half.  
By dusk, a pissed express had dragged me  
out of your life; hailstones jiggled on the roof.



## THE MOVIE MAKERS

They're at it again next door.  
I mean I can feel  
the weight of movements  
vibrating through the floor,  
thump th-thump thump.  
I could say to you  
'Just can't imagine  
what they get up to'  
but that would be a lie –  
I can picture only too well  
exactly what they get up to  
in poxyscope,  
in poxycolour.  
He's a big fella – 16 stone  
at a rough guess,  
and the women? Well  
a protagonist  
of his dimensions  
shouldn't find it too hard  
to keep their starstruck faces  
swathed in blissful grin  
right the way through  
a long night's screentest.



## EDEN IN THE GAME

### Part 1

Discretion is always painful  
but in a vicious world it's okay  
to ogle. Your touting eyes  
scan the hard-working street,  
your customers keep on coming;  
it's good business to watch  
over their fleeting moments.  
What emotion dominates  
in the heart of a girl like you?  
Is he a grey-haired fumbler,  
a vain cobbler of twenty pounds  
for fifteen minutes business,  
or a man you hate like a daddy;  
a dick that blanks memory.



## PART 2: EVE'S SONG

I live for the light  
remembering Eden  
while the planet turns

like the sensual lily  
delicate and pale  
fertile and brave

I live for the light

opening my heart  
to the rising sun  
in body after body

remembering Eden  
while the planet turns.



### PART 3: THE GAME

Yes indeed my dear  
you're well adapted  
to the ancient game  
precocious and curved  
you're still young  
the sap rises quickly  
and wisely you remain  
eager for the duration;  
you love to observe  
how the world turns  
on a greased fulcrum  
and indeed this game  
has filled our pockets  
since the first day  
of the first millennium  
when the canny snake  
with its eye on profit  
first caused a man  
to pay much too much  
for a woman's touch.



## PART 4 (a) 'S SONG

Savage from the north  
the cold wind shakes  
the window pane –  
the thin curtains flap.

Ready on the big bed  
you smile. You're working  
late. As always

the metropolis  
can seem like Eden –  
here ours is to give  
and yours is to take.

The experience  
of youth, the loss  
and the gain,  
is treasured baggage.

## PART 3: THE GAME

Yes indeed my dear  
you're well adapted  
to the ancient game  
precocious and clever  
you're so young  
the sun rises quickly  
and wisely you remain  
eager for the dawn  
you love to observe  
how the world turns  
on a greased fulcrum  
and indeed this game  
has filled our pockets  
since the first day  
of the first millennium  
when the canny snake  
with its eye on profit  
first caused a man  
to pay much too much  
for a woman's touch



## PART 4 (b)

Two feather pillows  
make the elbow prop –  
you light your cigarette.

As you drag cancer  
through its full length  
the curtains hang limp.

Next door a bed  
head is banging the wall.

## YOUR DULL POEM – HOW TO REFURBISH IT

try

a new

approach

a new

visual

i

sation

know

how

to

re

lish

it

but

remember

a new

concern

a new

savoir faire

won't

make your

ed

it

or

pub

lish

it



## SQUEAL

As a boy I saw daffodils spat upon  
by the old farts in Washington DC  
trampled by pedlars of laissez faire

I saw the Zimmerman kid  
pointing with his petulant pen  
ranting in the half-light  
against the full-frontal crudity of America

but nobody was listening  
they were afraid of the Russians  
the Chinese the Roswell visitors  
every black guy who looked hip

so the Vietcong kept on fighting  
the fire-bombs kept on falling  
big-bucks businessmen  
slapped patents on the moon's dust

now the bona fide wars are American  
wars - yeup - it's back to the stone age  
for wicked terrorist nations.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

I'm so sorry  
that the birthday  
card I sent  
to you in a hurry  
arrived late

don't get irate  
just blame  
all the decaying  
brain-cells  
that mediate

this dumb age.



## THE VIEW FROM CHICAGO

It was just a hood on a crossbeam –

he figured we all could live –  
he said none of us needs to die –  
of course we cheered

when blood and water  
spewed from his holed ribcage  
like liquor from a busted still.

The dumb cops think  
it's a break in communion –  
huh! maybe it is – maybe it ain't –

Hey, d'ya wanna throw some dice?



## CYCLES

a pig-skin saddle  
set on metallad go-fast livery  
and new spring lambs

sturdy strap-in pedals  
made of toughest aluminium  
and scorched summer sand

drop down handlebars  
for smoother aerodynamics  
and crisp brown leaves

a sleek alloy frame  
taut on strengthened springs  
and frozen fall pipes

It was just a hood on a crossbeam -

he figured we all could live -  
he said none of us needs to die

of course we cheated

when blood and water  
spewed from his belted ribcage  
like liquor from a busted still

The dumb cops think  
it's a break in communion -  
tuh! maybe it is - maybe it ain't

Hey, d'ya wanna throw some dice?



## PSEUDO-MINISTERS

There's none to admire:  
no philosophers,  
no fixers,  
no visionaries,  
no heavyweights  
oozing authority.

As plain water  
after sweet red wine  
is contemptible,  
so too  
pseudo-ministers,

white-house-bland,  
wapping-  
synchronized.

There's none to admire  
in a clique  
of the mediocre.



## UNWANTED BABIES

*dimitte nobis debita nostra*

Since sixty-seven  
six point five million  
robbed of the first necessity

six point five million  
who didn't feel  
the sting of a midwife's slap

six point five million  
who didn't suck  
the milk from a natal breast

six point five million  
who didn't catch  
the glint of a father's love.

Since sixty-seven  
six point five million  
trashed in a bio-garbage bin.



## TWO GIRLS

With thick Yorkshire hair and bright celtic eyes

together with a shy elegance,

Ruth was all I could wish her to be.

Then again, at nineteen and shaped like Aphrodite

Lisa had the well-drilled hair of a nymph,

it framed her fabulous face;

her femininity was precise and perfect.

I drooled over Ruth at fifteen,

for Lisa nearer fifty. Psychologically

they were spawn of one DNA. Twin-like

in demeanour, both could at times display

a vulnerability indicative of inner strength.

In truth, they were all but Geminian;

in my deep mind Lisa metamorphosed into Ruth,

she stepped into the old Ruth-archetype.

Yet a difference remained.

Ruth was quiet, she was born to be homely;

Lisa was serene, but unconsciously sexy –

her Naomian hips could've swayed for Britain.

But both young ladies (being proper young ladies)

possessed a heavily pregnant smile:

at fifteen and again at fifty,

it was a memory each made gift

as we silently said goodbye.



## THE KISS I DIDN'T GET

*(For Anne)*

She wore her black tousled hair down to shoulder length,  
her skin was pale and as smooth as an old Greek sculpture,  
her young lips were full and girlishly unadorned.

Once when we were on holiday with my aunt and uncle

I had wanted to kiss her. But I was shy and she was shy;

I didn't get my kiss. Oh, but I knew

what it was to be dizzied with love.

If I could have sooth-sayed into the unknown

or consulted with tea-leaves to see how the future'd pan,

I'd have snatched a kiss despite objections,

I'd have hidden it away in the casket of my heart.

Later, I'd have placed that kiss on an altar

and pendelum'd the cage of burning incense.

Cousin, where are you now? When you and I could bump  
in Leeds, you and your bloke were prospecting for salaries.

Nisi'd now and absoluted, I think of you quite often;

I contemplate

that special kiss, the one I didn't get. No, but life is endless

in a dream, there's space for opportunity to fly our way.

That day might yet manifest

when two greying wallflowers despatch with a smooch

their old holiday handicap.



## THE DANCER

When I asked her why  
she kept on coming in to work  
she said it was all she could do.  
To push the point home  
she smiled at the voyeur  
panting at the next table,  
squeezed her glistening breasts.  
Then fixing me with her eyes  
she took hold of my hand  
and placed it on her warm thigh.  
She oohed her scarlet lips:  
this same provocative ploy  
was used by Marilyn Monroe,  
sex goddess of the 1950s  
but of course in the 1950s  
Marilyn was young and beautiful.



## LOVE

Love, they said, is a many-splendoured thing;  
it can dazzle a band of muscle-bound builders,  
bankers, plumbers: they'll groan, be blinded  
but smile, whatever the splendour's reverse.  
And, love, they said, is a bony-knuckled thing;  
it can sandwich a gang of gung-ho teachers,  
truckers, vicars: they'll reel, be winded  
but smile, even when God seems perverse.  
For love, they said, is an equi-handed thing:  
revealing pain it will ration candour,  
exposing folly it will bury rancour;  
love plugs it's ears when the muckslingers sing.

So I said, listen up friends, mull on this:  
love is the ribbon in a little girl's hair!



## WHAT SHOULD I SAY

about a hipswinging poet  
who pockets a wad  
to extrude

a pamphlet of poems  
that mirrors  
a pamphlet of poems

the hipswinging poet  
could extrude  
without the wad?

Yep, they've got balls  
these hipswinging poets.



## SONG

1

When you lay with him, did you think of me?  
Did my fragmenting heart squadron through your mind?  
Did you hear the life-long vow we made  
on red-hot summer evenings?  
Did you hear our life-long vow  
Fragmenting

2

When you lay with him, did you think of me?  
Did my exploding trust shrapnel through your mind?  
Did you see the life-long love we made  
on red-hot winter evenings?  
Did you see our life-long love  
Exploding.



## ELEGY FOR EUNICE ODIO, PART 1

In the fables of Greece Eurydice swarm in the Hudson river  
(the magnificent Hudson that adorns Manhattan)

Eunice Odio sowed seeds of her poetry in San Jose  
Eunice Odio lend-leased her genius to Guatemala  
Eunice Odio blessed America's ample heaven

In the fables of Greece Eurydice versified love for Orpheus

Eunice Odio went to New York City to dream of Mexico  
Eunice Odio discovered New York City was upside-down  
Eunice Odio damned America's ample heaven

In the fables of Greece Eurydice got hooked on Tex-Mex roses

Eunice Odio coughed up stanzas for Louis Armstrong  
Eunice Odio endlessly rocked the Statue of Liberty  
Eunice Odio floated on ice-floes in the Hudson river  
(the magnificent Hudson that adorns Manhattan)

In the fables of Greece Eurydice fandangoed with death.



## ELEGY FOR EUNICE ODIO, PART 2

Eunice Odio – poet – mythologist – traveller – died  
Eunice Odio whose stiff meat lay undiscovered for days  
Eunice Odio whose pitting was barely attended

but affirmations exist – yes affirmations exist  
from the tuned sensations of sadness  
as the men were tensed with the ropes;

Costa Ricans caught the smell of burning incense  
Guatemalans glimpsed Orpheus alongside the priest  
Mexicans said Orpheus held a single red rose  
New Yorkers said some guy put a rose with the shroud.



## TWO POEMS FOR EARLY MORNING, 1

The slow sun rises,  
a cold earth stirs,  
my deep mind  
is quieted.

No formulas  
jostle my tongue;  
un-lipped  
my devotion

delights God,  
and angels  
who attend  
in the reverent air.



## TWO POEMS FOR EARLY MORNING, 2

The brazen night  
is scattered

the steering stars  
are faded

but look –  
like God Himself

I am.



